Public Works (1897) Department.

G.O., No. 1310 W

DATED 19 May 1897

[Despatch Abstract.]

Test Relief Works, Pro: Rev: Dept recording Board's Pro: embodying a report from the Collector of Godavari on the – started in the Bhadrachalam taluk, Comtd to D.E. Mails

[P.W. 25. 5,000—30-11-96.] 9.E. 9.5.97

Indexed. 20/5

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Public works (1897) department

Current Number: 4629

Government {1897} of Madras.

REVENUE.

Ca 2482

Recd. 11 · 5 } 1897.
Regd. 11 · 5

Enclosures
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G.O., No. 279, 29th April 1897.

No. 3310 W dt 19th May 1897

APRIL.

Communicated to the Supdg. Engr. I Circle.

14/5/97

S. E. I circle 5/6
20/5/97

Test Relief Works.

Board's Proceedings embodying a report from the Collector of Gódávari on the — started in the Bhadráchalam taluk, recorded with reference to G.O., No. 277, dated 29th April 1897.

O.L.S. 96
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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Read—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), dated 2nd April 1897, No. 271 :—

Read—the following letter from J. W. HUGHES, Esq., Special Assistant Collector, Gódávari District, to the Collector of Gódávari, dated Gauridevipeta, 17th March 1897, Dis. No. 349-S.A.A., and the endorsement thereon by the Collector of Gódávari, dated 17th March 1897, Ref. on Cur. No. 748-Ver. :—

With reference to paragraph 1 of your endorsement, Ref. No. 748-Ver., dated 22nd February 1897, on B.P., dated 11th February 1897, No. 126, I have the honour to report as follows :—

(1) I have been called upon to submit a report of the character prescribed in section 13 of the Famine Code ; this section contemplates such report being sent at a time " when it is apparent that scarcity is becoming severe, and deepening into famine." I can scarcely say this of Bhadráchalam taluk in the light of the information which I have now for, the test work, which was opened in the most affected part of the taluk has attracted no labourers although it has been open for the last ten days. A full report on this subject will be sent as soon as the work is closed. It will be enough to say here that the result would seem to show that the distress is not such as to call for Government relief at present.

(2) This preliminary point being understood, I can proceed to give as fully as possible all particulars in regard to the condition of the affected area, that is to say, Bhadráchalam taluk. The villages which are situated along the banks of the Gódávari and the Sabari may be left out of consideration altogether, for, a fair outturn of Manchijonna was obtained and harvested in the beginning of February. It is solely to the hill villages of the interior that our attention has to be directed. In these villages, the early crops which had yielded very little were consumed by the end of October last and the people were anxiously looking out for rain in the hope that the kondajonna crop might be saved. But no rain came. This kondajonna crop throughout the taluk is the staple crop cultivated on podus. The usual harvest time is about the middle of January, but the crop everywhere was a complete failure. In this way at the end of January as I anticipated the inhabitants of the interior villages found themselves without any stock of grain whatever except some insignificant quantities in a few isolated villages; nor had they any money wherewith to buy grain. The stock of roots and jungle produce on which the Koyas can subsist if necessary was reported by Mr. Ward so early as the 11th of November to be " nearly exhausted " and Mr. Ward, is doubtless the best authority on the subject in these parts. The work of cutting bamboos for the merchants—the only work on which the Koyas were employed at this period of the year—was fast drawing to a close and there appeared to be no other resources available for the population. It was under these circumstances that distress was anticipated early in February and sanction was applied for to open a test work in accordance with the provisions of section 17 of the Famine Code.

(3) It is now more than a month since distress was anticipated and in the light of subsequent information it appears that distress to any appreciable extent is not as yet making itself felt in the taluk. There are in my opinion two reasons for this, the first is that the merchants are making advances to all the Koyas on the security of their cattle or of the expected next year's crop or on their promise to supply ippa flowers or cut bamboos or drive bandies. The second is that the roots and jungle produce have lasted longer than was expected. The people are now consuming some roots and chiefly the fruit of the Taniki tree, while the women for their part gather firewood and sell it at the riverside villages for one or two annas per diem.

(4) I will now give as briefly and accurately as possible details of the condition and prospects of the three ranges into which the taluk is divided, taking each range separately. When we speak of prospects, we must, I fear, be somewhat indefinite. The Koyas apparently can subsist on the wild roots and various fruits of the jungle, but of these we have no statistics whatever. I can but give for what is worth, the information as supplied to me by the Koyas themselves. The ippa crop on which so much depends is still uncertain.

To take then, the first range—

Rekapalli.—This range is very hilly and the jungle is dense. The kondajonna crop here as elsewhere failed and the inhabitants of the interior have no grain. But the bamboo cutting continued here till the end of February, the hill people are getting advances from the merchants and living thereon. They can also get supplies of roots, &c., from the thick jungle and have a bountiful supply of toddy. They can live in this way till the rains come, and their work of bamboo cutting will re-commence. There need be very little anxiety about this range.

Marrigudem.—The kondajonna crop was a miserable failure, the Koyas have no stock of grain. They have no employment at all, they are engaged in cutting their podus and this year I am told, the area of podu cultivation will be larger than it has ever been before. The reason of this is that the sowcars are granting advances and the Koyas want to make sure of an ample crop which will have a balance after repayment of loans. With these advances, a small supply of cholum is purchased from time to time and in addition to this the people are living on the fruit of the " Tuniki tree " and " boddi keeralin." &c., which will not be exhausted until the end of this month. After that the Koyas say they will depend entirely on the ippa crop ; if it flowers abundantly, the produce will be collected and sold to the abkári contractors, it can also be used largely as food. In this range also, in the interior there are large numbers of toddy trees and so long as the Koyas can get toddy, they will be perfectly happy. But should the ippa crop fail and the sowcar's advances cease, both two contingencies that must be contemplated, there must be some distress in the range. I regret my inability to state now whether the ippa crop will be satisfactory or not. The rain which fell about the 19th of February has been useful and some trees are beginning to flower, I have consulted Mr. Ward, but he too is unable to express an opinion. I expect to be able before I leave the taluk on the 20th of this month to give the necessary information. The present condition of the people is quite up to the normal and there is no actual distress at present.

Bhadráchalam range.—This range is different in several respects from the other two ranges. There are no hills, the land is perfectly flat and is not covered by such dense jungle. The cultivated land too reaches to a further extent inland away from the river. Here again the kondajonna crop was a complete failure ; the ryots have no grain and no money, nor have they any employment. They are engaged in cutting podus and are living on advances made to them by the merchants supplementing the grain with the tuniki fruits. These fruits will last for a month and then the ippa flowers are expected ; whether there will be a good crop or not remains to be seen. The women get one or two annas per day by gathering firewood and grass and selling it at Bhadráchalam and Dumagudem, firewood in this range has a saleable value since the jungle is far removed from the riverside villages, in the other two ranges it is not a source of profit to the hill men. There is no toddy to be had in Bhadráchalam range, which is another distinguishing feature.

(5) To sum up for the three ranges together, the inhabitants of the interior villages have no grain and no money ; but they are not at present in distress and will not come to relief works, for they are living on advances made by the merchants and also consuming the tuniki fruit, boddi kuralu and some roots. In two ranges, also, they have a bountiful supply of toddy and in one firewood is sold for 1 or 2 annas daily. This state of things will continue for a month or six weeks and then the ippa flowers are expected. If they fail, which is unlikely (I think I may say so much), there must be some distress.

(6) As regards the supply of food-grains and the operations of trade, all requirements are being satisfactorily met. Rice can be obtained in small quantities from Bustar and from the Central Provinces. Rice also is being brought up in boats regularly from Rajahmundry as far as Bhadráchalam and even up to Dumagudem. But as far as the hill people are concerned, cholum is their staple food and cholum can be purchased at the riverside villages in quantities sufficient to meet local necessities. Usually at this period cholum is largely exported from the taluk, but this year the people are cautious and keep their stocks.

(7) Should the ippa flowers unfortunately fail us and distress be prevalent still, the Koyas would refuse to come to relief works until driven to the very last extremity. They are a peculiar people, slaves to custom; they will stubbornly refuse to undertake work at As. 1–3 per day when they usually get As. 3 for similar work. They follow their leader like sheep; what the headman says they must do, that they will do, and what the headmen says they must not do, that they will not do. The headmen of nearly all villages have been asked about these relief works and steadily refused even to consider them; they all say the people will not come to them, will never come to them, and having said this they will be ashamed to go back on their words. Logic is lost on them, persuasion is useless. With people of such character we must expect that they will keep away from relief works. If hunger, finally drives them in, they will probably be in a state of emaciation and too weak to do the allotted tasks. Under such circumstances a constant and thorough inspection of the villages would have to be undertaken, since a good deal of the relief tendered would have to be gratuitous. Of course every effort would be made to induce the Koyas to come to relief works before they lose their strength, but I am certain such efforts would be vain and this is not all; most of the Koyas, I feel sure, would rather die than do work at famine rates, they would retire to their jungles and take their chance of something to eat.

(8) To conclude, I may say that judging from my personal inspection of the villages and jungles through which I have been travelling, there is very little real distress at present. The Koyas are busily engaged in cutting podus and their physical condition is satisfactory. But they are living from hand to mouth, whether there will be actual distress during the next two months depends on whether the ippa crop will be a success or not. I think it will not be an entire failure, and as soon as I can send a reliable and complete forecast, I will do so. Again if we get an inch or more of rain in April or May, the jungles would at once furnish a large supply of roots and the distress would be relieved. In any case the distress would not continue after the breaking of the rains in June when the bamboo-cutting would re-commence and the jungle supplies be replenished. It is somewhat difficult to estimate the number who would require relief, since the ippa crop may vary in the different ranges; but it would not exceed 10,000 in all and the cost of supporting them at famine rates for the two months before the rains would be about half a lakh.

Endorsement by the Collector of Gódávari, dated 17th March 1897, Ref. on Cur. No. 748-Ver.

Submitted to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture, with reference to B.P., dated 11th February 1897, No. 126.

2. The test relief work opened in the Bhadráchalam taluk has attracted no labourers. The Special Assistant Collector's report about the test works is separately submitted.

3. As there is no immediate prospect of the test work attracting labourers, the Special Assistant Agent has closed it; all now depends upon the outturn of ippa flowers. If the crop is a fair one, no Koya will come near a relief work and the Koyas alone are to be thought of, for the fruit will furnish them with both meat and (by fermentation and distillation) drink. How the crop will turn out is yet unknown, but its prospects were greatly improved by the rain last month and there is at present

no cause to anticipate failure. If it should, however, fail, relief works will probably have to be re-started towards the end of April or at any rate an attempt made to re-start them to compel the money-lenders of the riverside villages to continue their advances in order to keep the Koyas from attending them. At the same time, as the Special Assistant points out, and as I also understand from the Rev. L. Cain of Dumagudem, who has spent years among them, the Koyas are a peculiar race to deal with, and will not, now they *have rejected* relief on the usual terms, probably come near a relief work, however hardly they may be pressed, as their pride will compel them to stay away. Another thing in the Bhadráchalam range, which is decidedly the worst which will militate against the success of relief works, is that crops have not been so bad in the adjoining state of Bastar where there are also many Koyas. If things get very bad in Bhadráchalam therefore it is probable that many of the Koyas will emigrate thither temporarily rather than go back on themselves and come to relief works where work is paid for at rates much below the mamul. The fear is that in such circumstances the women and children will suffer severely and to see that they do not the Special Assistant has been directed to order the local officials to report constantly on their condition, and I have asked the Rev. L. Cain to do the same and let me know whenever any material change for the worse in their condition shows itself. They will, however, only suffer as already stated, if the ippa crop fails; and I earnestly hope it will not. Should the condition of the ippa crop give serious cause for anxiety in the course of the next three weeks, I will proceed to Bhadráchalam and endeavour personally to come to some arrangement with the Koya headmen whose authority is almost supreme in their villages and who must be won over before any thing can be done. But at present there is no cause for any anxiety.

Resolution—dated 2nd April 1897, No. 271.

Recorded.

(True Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) L. E. BUCKLEY,
Famine Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
„ Collector of Gódávari.

Order—No. 279, Revenue, dated 29th April 1897.

Miscellaneous.

Recorded with reference to the Order No. 277, dated 29th April 1897.

not rec'd

(True Extract.)

A. Knapp.
for Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture).

Copy to the Public Works Department.
„ „ Local and Municipal Department.
„ „ Financial Department.

Exd. P. Seetharam.

60 Copies.

Public Works Department.

Government {1897} of Madras.

REVENUE.

Recd. } 1897. *Enclosures*

Regd. } *Spare copies*

G.O., No. 279, 29th April 1897.

Order thereon No. 1310 w.d. 19-5-97

Communicated to the Superintending Engineer I Circle –

APRIL.

(True extract)

(Sd.) D. de C.

To

The Supt. Engineer I Circle.

Test Relief Works.

Board's Proceedings embodying a report from the Collector of Gódávari on the — started in the Bhadráchalam taluk, recorded with reference to G.O., No. 277, dated 29th April 1897.

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(5) To sum up for the three ranges together, the inhabitants of the interior villages have no grain and no money ; but they are not at present in distress and will not come to relief works, for they are living on advances made by the merchants and also consuming the tuniki fruit, boddi kuralu and some roots. In two ranges, also, they have a bountiful supply of toddy and in one firewood is sold for 1 or 2 annas daily. This state of things will continue for a month or six weeks and then the ippa flowers are expected. If they fail, which is unlikely (I think I may say so much), there must be some distress.

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Government (1897) of Madras.

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G.O., No. 279, 29th April 1897.

Order thereon No. 1310W of 19-5-97

Communicated to the

Supt. g. Engineer I. Circle

(True Extract)

[signature] D.M.C.

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Regd. *Spare copies*

G.O., No. 264, 26th April 1897.

Ogl Cir(4482) sent to W on 7.5.97 with file -

APRIL.

Test-work.

Recording Proceedings of the Board of Revenue submitting, with remarks, a report on the failure of the — started at Kolanagudem in Bhadráchalam taluk, Gódávari district.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Read—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), dated 29th March 1897, No. 257 :—

Read—again Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (R.S., L.R. and Agri.), dated 12th March 1897, Mis. No. 1899.

Abstract.—Recording telegram from the Collector of Gódávari stating that no labourers attended the test relief work at Bhadráchalam.

Read—also the following letter from J. W. HUGHES, Esq., Special Assistant Collector, Gódávari, to the Collector of Gódávari, dated Gauridevipeta, 12th March 1897, Dis. No. 349-S. A.A. and the Endorsement thereon by the Collector of Gódávari, dated 18th March 1897, Ref. No. 338-Ver. :—

I have the honour to report as follows. In accordance with the instructions contained in your letter, Ref. on Cur. No. 338-Ver., I opened a test relief work in the northern part of the taluk, which is certainly the tract most affected. The work chosen was the road from Chinnampeta to Lachigudem, mere jungle cutting to be done such as the Koyas are thoroughly accustomed to do. The work was widely advertised throughout the taluk, and as far as the northern or Bhadráchalam range was concerned, I myself at jamabandi on the 26th February personally explained to the headmen of all the villages the conditions of the work, the time and place, &c.

2. On the 2nd of March my tent was pitched at Kolanagudem, the point from which cutting was actually to commence, and on the 3rd early in the morning I arrived there. The Public Works Department Supervisor, with two Overseers, was present, as well as the Tahsildar and the Revenue Inspector. A tom-tom was beaten morning and afternoon, but no one came until 3–30 P.M., when twenty-nine Koyas from the villages near Dumagudem came to me with a chit from the Rev. John Cain, stating that they wanted work. However I interviewed them at once, and as soon as they learnt the wages proposed, they would have nothing to do with the work and went off. Their physical condition was satisfactory.

On the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th, the tom-tom was again beaten regularly ; all officials, including myself, remained ready on the spot, but not one cooly came. On the 7th I started on tour through some of the interior villages, leaving the work in charge of the Supervisor. A red flag was stuck up prominently on the spot where my tent had been and everything was ready to receive applicants for work. But I have received a report from the Supervisor to-day to the effect that no coolies have come. Under these circumstances I have ordered the work to be closed in anticipation of your sanction ; I have taken this course, because it seems to me a waste of time keeping the Public Works Department officers waiting about Kolanagudem. I myself am engaged in jamabandi now at Gauridevipeta. Besides it would take at least eight days for me to get a reply from you. I request, therefore, that my action may be approved. I have informed the Superintending Engineer and the Executive Engineer of this step. No coolies have come and it is certain that none will present themselves for famine wages for some time to come. They have had ten days to make up their minds.

3. I have only to add that all the necessary arrangements were made—a small kitchen was erected and a water-pandal ; ample materials were at hand for the erection of a large kitchen and huts, if the necessity had arisen. There was very little water to be had along the road, it could only be obtained from pits dug in the vagus here and there, consequently a water-pandal was provided with water pots ; if coolies had come, some of them would have been made to fetch water from the Gódávari, a distance of 2 or 3 miles. The Komaties of Dumagudem and Bhadráchalam had opened a shop on the spot, and it was arranged that cholum should be sold at the price prevailing in Bhadráchalam. As for tools, the Koyas would bring their own axes and no supply was necessary.

4. I think it unnecessary to open any other test work. There is no other part of the taluk affected so much as the Bhadráchalam range, and the road selected was situated most conveniently for a test, since people could have come easily enough both from Marrigudem and Bhadráchalam ranges.

5. The conclusion to be drawn from the failure of the work is that the distress is not bad enough now to compel the Koyas to work at famine rates. It unhappily does not prove that there is no distress, for the hillmen will not come to such work until driven to extremities. It will be necessary, therefore, to be constantly on the look out, and I have instructed the Tahsildar and the Revenue Inspectors to thoroughly inspect the interior villages. I myself will remain in the taluk till the 20th of this month ; I cannot remain longer, since I have to go through Chódavaramu division, which I have not yet visited and have to do the jamabandi there as well as in Polavaram and Yellavaram divisions. The jamabandi has to *be* finished before the end of May, as the rains come on early in June.

6. I have informed the headmen of the villages that should the Koyas ever feel inclined to accept relief on the terms offered they can inform me or the Tahsildar and relief works will be opened again.

Endorsement by the Collector of Gódávari, dated 18th March 1897, Ref. No. 338-Ver.

Submitted to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture, in continuation of my endorsement Pet. Cur. No. 748-Ver. of 1897.

2. The Special Assistant Collector's action in closing the test-work after a trial of ten days is approved. The Superintending Engineer has been allowed to withdraw the Public Works Department subordinates from the Bhadráchalam taluk for the present. If the Ippa flower crop proves a failure, the work will have to be re-started about the end of April ; but at present there is no reason to anticipate that it will, and if it does not, no Koya can be expected to come near a relief-work. Should the Ippa crop unfortunately prove disappointing and the condition of the Koya women and children who will suffer first give cause for anxiety, the work must be re-started and arrangements somehow come to with their headmen to induce them and their dependants to the work. They are, however, a peculiar people to deal with and anything like compulsion have to be avoided or we may have the country in a blaze. At present, however, they seem to be quiet enough and there is no crime or other evidence of disaffection or acute distress. Should it be necessary to make an attempt to re-start the work in April, I will proceed myself with the Special Assistant Agent to Bhadráchalam and endeavour to start them on a satisfactory basis.

Resolution—dated 29th March 1897, No. 257.

Submitted for the information of Government in continuation of B.P., dated 12th March 1897, No. 1899.

2. The Collector's endorsement, Pet. C. No. 748-Ver., does not appear to have been received in the Board's office. He is requested to forward a copy of the same.

3. If any extra establishment was sent to the Gódávari for relief-work it might be passed on to Vizagapatam, where the Public Works Department requires strengthening.

4. Even if relief-work should again be necessary in Bhadráchalam the Collector would do well, at the outset at least, to place Mr. Ward in charge of it.

5. The Special Assistant Agent's remark, that the failure of the Koyas to come and work does not by any means prove that there is no distress, is correct. It is possible that gratuitous relief on a small scale might be necessary before the Koyas come to work, or even if they do not. The Special Assistant Agent ought to return as soon as he conveniently can to Bhadráchalam and watch events.

(True Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) L. E. BUCKLEY,
Famine Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
" Collector of Gódávari.

Order—No. 264, Revenue, dated 26th April 1897.

Miscellaneous.

Recorded.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) G. STOKES,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture).
" the Financial Department.
" the Local and Municipal Department.
" the Public Works Department.
" the Accountant-General.

Md. Shaik Karim.

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